FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
Susan Gerhart or Susan.Gerhart@noaa.gov
727/824-5305, FAX 727/824-5308

Florida West Coast Northern Subzone Closing to King Mackerel Commercial Fishing

NOAA Fisheries will close the Florida west coast northern subzone of the Gulf of Mexico to commercial fishing for king mackerel **effective 12:00 noon (local time), October 27, 2014**. The commercial quota of 178,848 pounds for this zone is projected to be reached by this date. This subzone is located in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico east of the Alabama/Florida state line and along Florida's west coast to the Lee/Collier County line. Florida is expected to close adjoining state waters at the same time. The closure will remain in effect through the end of the fishing year, June 30, 2015.

During the closure, no commercial fisherman may fish for or keep king mackerel in or from the closed zone. There is an exception for people aboard a vessel that has a charter/headboat permit for coastal migratory pelagic fish and a commercial king mackerel permit. Those people may keep the two-fish per person daily king mackerel bag limit from the closed zone, if the vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat. Vessels are considered to be operating as a charter vessel or headboat when they carry a passenger who pays a fee or when more than three people are aboard, including operator and crew.

During the closure, no king mackerel caught in the closed zone may be bought, sold, or traded. This includes recreational and tournament-caught fish. King mackerel that were traded or sold before the closure and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor may still be sold.

This summary is not a substitute for the actual regulations. We encourage you to read the full text of the regulations, available at http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/policy_branch/index.html.